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ABSTRACT

The relevance of research to the role of teachers in classroom observation and appraisal is discussed. Focus is on: (1) the validity of classroom research literature and the credibility of classroom researchers, centering on content, methodology, and audience; (2) the role of research in teacher professionalism and empowerment; and (3) teacher learning and change. Most classroom research is difficult to access, has limited applicability to teaching effectiveness, comes from often unexplained methodological bases, and is not always explicitly conceptualized. Classroom observation will only become useful when educational researchers increase the relevance of research to practice and develop theories unique to what they see, couched in a "language of criticism" that is acceptable to teachers. Professional development will be hindered if classroom observation systems: (1) are imposed rather than negotiated; (2) address only administrative needs; (3) imply an unpleasant action with unrewarding consequences; (4) ignore moral and ethical issues of autonomy; (5) fail to consider the need for time for reflection during the school day; and (6) fail to support learning after appraisal. Appraisal processes should assist teachers in building their repertoires of observational studies. (SLD)

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The relevance of classroom research literature to the present concerns being expressed about the observation of teachers in classrooms for appraisal purposes

by

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Paper presented to the British Educational Research Association Conference as part of a Symposium on Appraisal, September, 1987, Manchester

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The relevance of classroom research literature to the present concerns being expressed about the observation of teachers in classrooms for appraisal purposes

Classroom research literature on the face of it must be relevant to all those involved in teaching learning and the management of schools and the schools system. At least in principle, the very best research can provide valuable (if not always new or original) insights which may assist those engaged in classroom observation in their understanding of events within a broader explanatory framework than might otherwise be the case. Even the most experienced of educators can always learn! However, the intriguing title of this paper brings together 'relevance', 'concerns' and 'appraisal' and in doing so, complicates what otherwise would be a relatively straightforward theoretical discussion of the merits of classroom research literature. Three key questions are raised:

1. To whom is classroom research relevant?
2. Who are raising concerns about classroom observation for appraisal and what are these concerns?
3. What are the purposes of appraisal?

Whether classroom research is relevant or perceived to be relevant by policy makers, teachers and others outside the narrow academic community will in part be contingent upon whether it meets their perceived needs - and this will not necessarily depend upon its intrinsic merits alone and the skill with which the research is communicated but also on the purposes for which it will be used. This issue of purposes is closely linked with the very different concerns raised about classroom observation for appraisal by teachers and others with the responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of appraisal. For example, in the context of appraisal, classroom observation may be something done to teachers by those in

superordinate positions for the purposes of collecting information which is then able to be used for judgemental purposes and later as comparative data (i.e. a predictive mode of classroom observation). Some of the literature may well be perceived as relevant by this group who wish to predict teaching quality on the assumption that they can control it by using universal standards. It may, however, be perceived as less relevant by those who wish to see the literature utilised critically, as part of an appraisal programme in which classroom observation is used primarily for professional development purposes.

Issues concerning appraisal generally have already been raised in many fora, not least at a conference organised by BERA in 1986 and reported in Dockerell et al (1986). It is not, therefore, my intention to rehearse them here. However, the relevance of classroom research literature to classroom observation must be seen as part of the major appraisal issues of ethics and morality (Who does it? Who owns the data? How will it be used? Who designs? Who controls? Will it be a part of a process of professional development or a tool of the administration?); standards (Are they universally or contextually derived? How do we know what 'good teaching', 'effective' teachers and 'efficient' learning looks like?); and practicality (How long will it take? Do we have the time? Will there be follow-up observation? Will it be helpful to teachers and pupils?) There does not seem to be a shortage of advice on all these concerns, mainly in the form of researches and articles published by academics, DES dictats and HMI reports and 'matters for discussion' on the quality of schooling and teachers. In considering the relevance of classroom research literature to concerns expressed about classroom observation of teachers it is useful, I believe, to focus upon:

1. The validity of classroom research literature (and thus the credibility of classroom researchers). These issues centre upon content, methodology and audience.
2. The role of research in teacher professionality and empowerment.
3. Teacher learning and change.

1. The validity of classroom research literature.

Traditionally, classroom research has been conducted by academics, mainly working full-time in further and higher education, with backgrounds in the fields of psychology and sociology and often with little extended experience as classroom teachers. The kinds of classroom research have therefore been influenced by different genres of inquiry, and, over the years there has been much debate about the validity and reliability of particular research methodologies. Sources of error and issues of reliability have been well documented, and a recent summary is contained in Evertson and Green (1986). In England, nowhere have these debates been more fiercely conducted than between those engaged in the 'objective scientific' genres which have sought to quantify and compare classroom teaching and learning through, for example, the use of 'experimental 'and statistical techniques, and those favouring the 'ethnographic', 'illuminative' or 'literary criticism' approaches associated with case study and action research. Even some of the more recent hybrid research programmes which mix experiment with ethnography, multiple regression with multiple case studies, and surveys with personal diaries have not always produced uncontentious results (Bennett 1976, 1981; Galton and Simon, 1980; Rutter 1979; Mortimore et al, 1985).

So the first problem with classroom research which should be noted is one of bias. All research programmes which grow out of a particular perspective necessarily imply a particular value system on the part of the researcher(s) and this is not always made explicit. A recent review of nineteen reviews of teaching process - student outcome research that critically evaluated at least three studies and two teaching constructs, for example, found that, '.... they reflect the inexplicit and varied standard procedures in Jackson's (1980) analysis of 87 review articles in prominent education, psychological and sociological journals. None of the reviews, for example, describe their search procedures, and only one stated explicit criteria for inclusion and exclusion of primary studies ...' (Waxman and Walberg 1982). Thus the research and its documentation will inevitably illuminate some part of the world of teaching and learning while ignoring the rest.

Individual studies themselves are both fascinating and informative, revealing such aspects of classroom life as the hidden curriculum (Jackson 1968; Snyder 1971); teaching routines (Yinger 1979); coping strategies (Sharp and Green 1975); hypotheses about classroom discourse (Barnes and Todd 1977; Coulhard 1974); school climate (Rutter et al 1979); teaching and learning styles (Galton and Simon 1980; Bennett 1976; Bennett et al 1981); school effectiveness (Mortimore et al 1985); classroom organisation (Barker-Lunn 1984); and teacher thinking (Clark and Peterson 1985). The list is endless, and it is not my intention to present a full picture or even a critique! What is clear both from the content and methodologies is that -

1. there is no 'real world' of the classroom or teaching and learning, but there are many such worlds 'perhaps nested within one another, perhaps occupying parallel universes which frequently, albeit unpredictably,

intrude one on another!

'Each of these worlds is occupied by the same people, but in different roles and striving for different purposes simultaneously. Each of these contexts is studied by social scientists and educators, becoming the subject of theoretical models and treatises. Each has its own set of concepts and principles, and, quite inevitably its own set of facts, for facts are merely those particular phenomena to which our questions and principles direct our attention.'

(Wittrock 1986)

2. each study has its own particular bias in terms of its methodologies and the value system of the researcher. These are not always made explicit. It has been argued that more importance should be given by researchers to adequate conceptualisation.

'By and large ... the researcher receives a fairly narrow initiation into the study of education, with heavy emphasis on the technical requirements of research and with critical attention being concentrated on the technical differences between rival methodologies. Critical discussion among researchers about the relative objectivity of different approaches, for instance, is often philosophically poor.'

(Barrow 1986)

3. in attempting to relate findings of classroom rearch to increasing teaching and school effectiveness, not only are there the problems of error and reliability but also it is necessary to note the findings of the authors of a paper presented to this annual conference in 1983 that, 'Even if we adopt a generous view, then, of what has been discovered to date, a sizeable three-quarters of the differences in effectiveness

between schools and teachers have remained apparently 'unexplained' '
(Gray and Jones 1985)

4. the language of research reporting and the journals and conferences in which research is disseminated are often inaccessible to practising teachers. Partly because of this, research and researchers have a low credibility rating among many teachers, so that, regardless of worth there are significant problems of effective dissemination and utilization.

5. the methodologies used in much research require a technical expertise which is unavailable to most teachers and, even if available, would be impractical in the context of classroom observation for appraisal.

6. the debate concerning the efficiency of particular research studies occurs within small groups of academics and goes largely unnoticed by the vast majority of schoolteachers who perceive research as irrelevant.

None of these points is intended to suggest that classroom research is of no use to those engaged in classroom observation, but simply that they should be aware of its limitations and actively seek to avoid attempts to apply particular research findings to all classrooms in all school settings.

While it is asserted that there is much to learn from research which provides explanatory frameworks for classrooms and schools, the implication is that to use predictive frameworks for classroom observation would be to oversimplify or distort the uniqueness and unpredictability of particular classrooms. So the use of standardised rating scales based, for example, upon teacher characteristics, organisational or interactive strategies would

not only be irrational but also be unlikely to be of practical use in increasing teaching effectiveness. If rating scales were used, then teachers might well seek fidelity with the scales, or 'teach to the test' if predicted pupil outcomes were part of the classroom observation 'effectiveness' criteria. Similarly, traditional methodologies would be impractical for use in classrooms, given that the most likely people to be observing on a regular and meaningful basis would be the teacher or a colleague (whether it be a peer or headteacher). Local Education Authority Officers or others from outside the school would be those who would observe least often, so that it would be essential for them to ensure the validity of their own knowledge base by close consultation with the teachers themselves (perhaps in order to build teacher profiles which take account of the different contexts in which teachers work).

This brings us immediately to a discussion of the relevance of research in relation to the role of teachers in classroom observation and appraisal.

The role of research in teacher professionality and empowerment

> 'Teaching and education research do not have a happy association. To many teachers much educational research appears irrelevant.... They have little part in initiating and conducting the research. The issues selected for examination are not theirs. They are defined in ways that take little account of the day-to-day intricacies of the teacher's task, and are dressed up in methodological mysteries and incomprehensible jargon.....' (Woods 1986)

Even today, most of the research into classrooms patently ignores the professionalism of teachers which is embodied in such concepts as 'connoisseurship' (Eisner 1979), and 'reflective practitioner' (Schon 1983). A common feature, almost regardless of the methodologies employed, seems to be that research is about teachers, schools and classrooms. Researchers from outside the school (active) operate on teachers and pupils inside the school (passive). While there may be any number of reasons presented for this - it is more 'efficient' for researchers who face pressures for publication from within their own academic community and who for the most part conduct their research part-time to design, implement and evaluate their own work; or teachers do not possess the technical skills, time or energy to engage in the kind of systematic 'study' required by higher education - they implicitly empower the researcher and, at the very least, do not enable the teacher to contribute to an activity in which they are the chief, if not the only, stakeholders.

An alternative approach to the study of teachers, schools and classrooms which recognises teachers as researchers and in doing so asserts their professionalism (while providing an operational redefinition of their job!) is variously known as action-research (Rapaport 1970; Carr and Kemmis 1986); praxis (Hodgkinson 1983); and action science (Argyris et al 1985). Its characteristics have been well documented and most if not all will be familiar with them. Nevertheless, it is worth stating here that the research seeks to inform decision making, to be credible to teachers and to have practical benefits. The teacher is, in effect, recognised as a 'reflective practitioner' (Schon 1983; 1987) able to assume responsibility for identifying and solving problems in a collaborative manner. Unlike traditional research, action research builds utilisation strategies into the overall design by

collaboration among practitioners who themselves define the scope, goals and methods of the research (Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice!). In effect, action research represents a commitment to the acceptance of the validity of holistic and qualitative information and to the productivity of interpretive problem solving. The action researcher is a researcher in the practice context:

> 'He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. His inquiry is not limited to deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from doing.... Because experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into his inquiry. This reflection-in-action can proceed, even in situations of uncertainty or uniqueness, because it is not bound by the dichotemies of Technical Rationality.'
>
> (Schon 1983)

How is action research and the business of teacher empowerment related to the topic of this paper? Let us rehearse the discussion so far. We have asserted that most classroom research literature is difficult to access, has limited applicability to teachers (as they perceive it) and to increasing teaching effectiveness, comes from a variety of often unexplained methodological biases, and is not always conceptualised explicitly. Researchers themselves are not always intimately acquainted with life in classrooms. Indeed, many deliberately distance themselves from practice. Nor does their research necessarily take full account of teachers' intentions, contexts, or perceptions of classroom action. It follows that, regardless of who

administers classroom observation as part of appraisal, unless teachers themselves have a personal and professional involvement in the design, processes and outcomes of the observations and feel a sense and a reality of ownership in that part of the appraisal process which focus on the central locus of their professional lives, then there will inevitably be problems of knowledge dissemination, adoption and utilisation.

Present concerns about classroom observation for appraisal : teacher learning and change

> '... there is little doubt that plurality is a fact of institutional life to which the integrity condition for evaluation demands attention. It is not merely a plurality of values, such as is inherent in all educational ventures; what is a 'good' course, an 'effective' lecturer, a 'successful' student; (what is the best way to train teachers); what sort of qualities does a good teacher need; how should a teacher-training course relate to educational change - by producing a teacher who conforms to and perpetuates established norms and practices or one who works to change them?' (Adelman and Alexander 1982)

Here perhaps is the crux of the debate, for the concerns being expressed about the observation of teachers in classrooms for appraisal purposes are linked inextricably with the purposes of appraisal. The integrity of the stated purposes will be manifested in the roles which teachers play in its design, processes and outcomes. For example, if we take the purposes defined in the Graham Report (1985) that appraisal schemes should aim to :

'a) improve learning opportunities for all pupils

b) improve the management and support of the learning process

c) improve the 'tone' or hidden curriculum, which influences all work in the school.

As far as the teacher is concerned, the process should :

a) recognise and support effect practice;

b) identify areas of development and improvement;

c) identify and develop potential'

then it is clear that teachers must play a central role in the observation of their classrooms, and that they must be able to use practical methodologies which are subject to scrutiny in order to achieve this. Peer observation implies agreed, negotiated observation instruments as does superordinate observation. The key word will be 'validity' rather than reliability, implying case study rather than survey.

Embedded in these terms are concepts of empowerment and enhanced skilling of teachers rather than the metamorphosis of the artist teacher to the technician teacher which is implied by classroom observation in which teachers are not closely involved. Only when educational researchers increase the relevance of research to practice and the practitioners by becoming intimate with practice and by developing theories which are unique to what they see and a 'language of criticism' which is acceptable to teachers (Eisner 1985) will classroom observation fulfil its avowed purposes of informing classroom practice, supporting teachers, maintaining and enhancing confidentiality and professionalism. Classroom research can then be used as a means of providing information about the classroom as a basis for feedback and discussion both to the employer and the employee.

This is why, especially in the context of contractual accountability, it is essential for those involved in the observation of teachers for appraisal purposes to take account of principles for teacher learning and change. However carefully articulated and realistic programmes of classroom research and observation as part of appraisal are, if those involved wish to make any significant impact upon practice they must take into account the human factor. This is necessary first because development of any kind inevitably involves people in a reappraisal of values, attitudes and feelings as well as practice, and these are, by definition, not governed by rationality nor amenable to prescription; and second, because attempts to promote appraisal as part of staff development are unlikely to meet with success unless there is an active consideration of the psychological and social dynamic in its planning, process and evaluation.

If we begin from the premise that, '... the ultimate arbiter of whether some finding has implications for practice is the person engaged in practice ...' (Fenstermacher 1983) then it follows that teachers have the capacity to be self-critical and must be engaged centrally in appraisal processes. Many (hopefully most) teachers will be 'connoisseurs' or potential connoisseurs who are able not only to distinguish between what is significant about one set of teaching and learning practices and another, to recognise and appreciate different facets of their teaching and colleagues or pupils' learning, but also, as critics, to 'disclose the qualities of events or objects that connoisseurship perceives' (Eisner 1979). Classroom observation schemes should recognise and capitalise upon teachers' capacity to be self-critical. They should assume a store of practical knowledge about practice and have built in opportunities for this to be made explicit, where appropriate, and utilized. One way of doing this is through the support and development of

self-monitoring strategies. Yet the capacities to be self-critical and develop self-monitoring strategies are often limited by socialisation, psychological and practical factors such as time, energy and isolation.

What then are the best conditions for ensuring that classroom research literature and classroom observation for appraisal purposes will enhance teacher learning and professional development? Clearly the responsibility of the research community and education 'managers' must be to minimize constraints upon learning itself and indeed upon the motivation to learn. By implication, they must not impose, but negotiate, they must work with schools and teachers in identifying needs, they must accept that learning and change is a lengthy, time consuming business and, in doing so, they must recognise and resource the need for teacher reflection, evaluation and planning within the school day with appropriate human and financial support. The grant related in-service training scheme (DES 6/86) enables LEAs to begin to provide more resources, for example, in terms of supply cover for teachers in support of school-focused work, and the use of pupil teacher staffing ratios to create the possibility of teachers being in school but not necessarily always in face-to-face contact with pupils. However, the scheme re-emphasises the LEAs' responsibilities for the quality of in-service provision. One consequence of this is that they must adopt interventionist roles which are seen to take account of the accumulated knowledge on teacher learning and change.

Another is that they must take account of teachers' learning needs; and the following five principles for maximising the conditions for effective professional learning in the context of appraisal are raised as issues for further discussion and research:

a. Learning requires opportunities for reflection and self-confrontation.

b. Teachers and schools are motivated to learn by the identification of an issue or problem which concerns them.

c. Teachers learn best through active experiencing/participation.

d. Decisions about change should arise from reflections upon and confrontation of past and present practice.

e. Schools and teachers need support throughout processes of change.

a. **Internal constraints and the need for reflection and self-confrontation**

'The best way to improve practice lies not so much in trying to control people's behviour as in helping them control their own by becoming more aware of what they are doing' (Elliott 1977)

In his survey of research in this area, Smyth (1984) reports that adults learn when they are provided with opportunities for continuous guided reflection, based on 'lived experience'. He suggests that adults (and teachers) learn by doing and benefit most from those situations which combine action and reflection. Elliott (1984) comments upon the 'lack of a rich stock of self-generated professional knowledge', seeing the cause of this as being the traditional isolation of teachers' practice; while the ILEA Report (1984) notes that 'a well intentioned respect for professional autonomy can lead some teachers to become prisoners within their classrooms'. Clearly, then, the message would seem to be that appraisal and professional development should present opportunities for less teacher isolation and more time for reflection upon action, outside as well as inside the classroom.

Most, if not all teachers, often engage in what Schon describes as 'reflection-in-action ... a reflective conversation with the situation' (Schon 1983). Indeed, this is a significant means of generating new knowledge (eg of children's learning processes), skills (eg in responding to children) and

concepts (eg of the communication of knowledge). In fact, 'reflection-in-action' is a necessary part of survival in the classroom, for at least initially, it serves to reduce many variables which exist in any given situation, thus empowering teachers 'to re-make and if necessary re-order the world in which they live' (Smyth 1987).

b. **Teachers and schools are motivated to learn by the identification of an issue or problem which concerns them (ie which they own)**

If it is recognised that teachers are active learners then it follows that an issue or problem which others identify may be perceived as irrelevant or not worthwhile unless they themselves can be convinced of its validity.

Furthermore, most teachers share needs of:

- Affiliation: the need for a sense of belonging (to a team)
- Achievement: the need for a sense of 'getting somewhere' in what is done
- Appreciation: the need for a sense of being appreciated for the efforts one makes
- Influence: the need for a sense of having some influence over what happens within the work setting.
- Ownership: the need for a sense of personal investment in the process of appraisal and its outcomes.

c. **Teachers learn best through active experiencing/participating**

To be self-critical is to be able to participate in one's own learning. There is much accumulated evidence to suggest that teachers learn best when they are actively involved in determining the focus of their learning. Participation for teachers, as for children, provides oppor-

tunities, 'For the development of decision-making skills, enlarges their perspectives and helps them become better informed about their own roles, responsibilities and problems of their colleagues' (Simons 1982). Although writing in the context of whole school evaluation, the claims for participation which the author outlines would apply equally to appraisal. There is no assumption that all teachers wish to be self-directing. Some, like children, may wish to be 'told' things, or may have an expectation that they should be told. Indeed, where teachers are participants in their own learning and appraisal, problems may arise because their inquiry skills are under or undeveloped. Indeed for some teachers who, for example, may be 'currently encountering conditions of decisional equilibrium or saturation, increasing participation may actually prove to be highly dysfunctional' (Aluth and Belasco 1972) Although there is research which indicates that not all teachers wish to participate or indeed derive satisfaction from doing so (Duke, Showers, and Imber, 1980), this is more often than not the product of role expectation, personality factors or socialisation. There are schools and LEAs in which teachers have long been treated as 'passive consumers within their own organisational structure' (House 1974) and where 'time constraints and the control ethos of bureaucracy stand in the way of a teacher forging regular contacts with a range of different educators. This is not a situation which lends itself to obtaining and reflecting upon new ideas; (Morrison, Osborne and McDonald 1977).

The clear message here is that appraisal systems which do not fully involve teachers at all stages are, in effect, acting against their best learning interests.

d. **Decisions about change should arise from reflections upon and confrontation of past and present practice**

Confrontation of one's practice may, for example, involve a temporary 'deskilling' (MacDonald 1973). Certainly teachers who are involved in appraisal as part of a professional development process must be offered appropriate effective and intellectual support, be assisted in the collection and generation of information from the classroom and assisted in the validation of this.

e. **Schools and teachers need support throughout processes of change**

If teacher learning (as a result of appraisal) is indeed a long term process of up to two years duration involving experimentation, reflection and problem solving (Eraut 1983) then apprisal systems which do not invest in this long term support will not, in effect, be able to support the professional development of schools and teachers. This will create a credibility problem for those who manage.

Traditionally there has been a separation between those who 'know' about teaching (usually to be found in LEA inspection and advisory services and higher education institutions) and those who do the teaching (the school teachers). The former have informed the latter and these have accepted, rejected or modified their advice, clothing themselves with a 'healthy cynicism'. Attempts to change teachers and schools which have originated from the outside have often met with resistance or a rhetoric rather than a reality of change. This is particularly true of those attempts which have been under resourced and failed to take into account that learning and therefore change, is a long term process.

> "... desirable as speedy and inexpensive changes undoubtedly are from a political and economic viewpoint, they are not likely to be easily attained, and strategies for change which assume otherwise are not likely to prove cost effective in the long run." (Bolam 1985).

It seems, then, that resistance to innovation may be caused because teachers need to maintain current systems, because of plain stubborness, or because they themselves have played no significant part in its creation and development. This issue of ownership is vital in planning for staff development, for if heads and teachers do not feel that the work belongs to them (in the sense that it matches their perceived needs and those of the school) then they may not be prepared to accord the extra time, energy and commitment necessary for its development.

Formal classroom observation for appraisal will, for many teachers, be something new, an innovation, and as such will carry with it two elements which are potentially threatening to all but the most self-confident teachers - disclosure (to self and others) and feedback. Although writing within the context of innovation in American schools, Doyle and Ponder (1976) have much which is of relevance to the appraisal debate. They write of the possible effects of formal evaluation and the reduction of autonomy, increased 'visibility' and external control which accompanies this:

> "... the requirement for formal evaluation ... increases the information flow surrounding participants' techniques and practices. However meritorious these conditions might be, they combine to increase visibility ... With increased visibility comes a reduction in the isolation and functional autonomy of individual teachers and an increase in external control over them. Innovation projects, in other words, generate a set of control mechanisms which are typically absent from the normal teaching environment. Such mechanisms increase teacher passivity and suspend normal teacher reactions to improvement directives ..." (Doyle and Ponder 1976)

It follows, then, that where teachers are not themselves involved in decisions regarding the design, process and use of appraisal from the beginning, then it is quite likely that this enterprise upon which so much has been endowed by Government and others in terms of finance, resources and expectations, will have a negative effect on teacher learning. In summary, professional development will be hindered if classroom observation systems:

1. are imposed not negotiated ie presuppose that teachers are incapable of acting responsibly and autonomously,
2. address agencies, issues and concerns of someone within the administrative or bureaucratic hierarchy rather than the teacher or school (Smyth 1986) ie do not take into account the needs of teachers and schools as they perceived them,
3. imply a situation which is unpleasant, possesses psychological threat, and typically culminates in unrewarding consequences (Withall and Wood 1979) ie do not arise from and encourage trust, commitment and confidentiality,
4. involve one group of people using technology and knowledge to do things to another group of people in a systematic and manipulative way ie ignore moral and ethical issues of autonomy and ownership,
5. fail to take into account the need for time for reflection during the school day,
6. fail to provide tangible support for learning after appraisal ie in-service as a built in part of the scheme.

If teachers learn least from researchers from outside the system and most from their own and colleagues' experiences, then opportunities must be increased for teachers to:

a) have access to research carried out by 'outsiders' which they can understand

b) have opportunities to carry out research themselves.

These require attitudinal and practical shifts by both researchers in higher education and teachers. Clearly the kind of 'connoisseurship' research carried out by teachers either independently or in collaboration with others will be of a qualitative kind, and this must be recognised as being valid (if not generalisable) and worthwhile by the research community. Its role in appraisal processes should increasingly be to assist teachers in building their repertoires of explanatory observational studies, and less to pursue its own interests in the hope that teachers will then note and use the findings.

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